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BLM seeks public comment on proposed wild horse gather plan

MEEKER, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management is seeking public comments on a proposal to gather excess wild horses in northwest Colorado within the White River Field Office to sustain healthy public lands and wild horse populations.

Maintaining healthy wild horse populations is a key aspect of the BLM's multiple use mission to manage public lands for a variety of natural resources and uses. When wild horse herds grow to levels that are unsustainable for local resources, the ecological balance of these areas is altered and can impact plant and animal species on the range.

The BLM is evaluating humane approaches to gathering the wild horses. The BLM is proposing to use a helicopter to locate and guide wild horses toward a set of corrals as well as using water and bait trapping. The gathers could begin as early as September 2015. Up to 167 wild horses could be gathered and removed from the White River Field Office in 2015.

The White River Field Office manages the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area to maintain a healthy wild horse herd in balance with other resources and uses. This area currently has an estimated 377 wild horses, but the appropriate management level for that area is between 135 and 235 wild horses. The adjacent West Douglas Herd Area is not managed for wild horses but currently has an estimated population of 365 wild horses. Gathers could occur in either area as well as areas within the White River Field Office outside these boundaries.

The BLM planning documents evaluating the proposed gather operations are available at the White River Field Office at 220 E Market Street and online at: www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo.html. Public comments regarding proposed gather plans will be most helpful to the BLM if received by May 5, 2015. Written comments can be mailed to the White River Field Office, 220 E. Market Street, Meeker, CO 81641 or submitted via email to mkindall@blm.gov. General questions can be directed to Melissa Kindall at 970 878-3842.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address or any other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request the BLM to withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so.

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